

The Field Studies Council's AIDGAP series is designed to produce simple identification keys that can be used by naturalists who may not be familiar with the technical language in which many of the older-style keys have been written. An important feature of AIDGAP keys is the positioning of simple diagrams in the text alongside the couplets, so that the structures referred to can be readily identified. The shape and form of the antennae, wing venation, labrum, claws and the female saw sheath are often used in sawfly taxonomy. These are well illustrated in Wright's key and enable most genera to be identified without much trouble. Some of the nematine genera can be difficult to resolve, whatever key is used, as they contain some small species which need careful examination under high magnification and good lighting if details such as claw structure are to be seen. Sawflies with aberrant wing venation do occur and, as stated by the author, these may not key out correctly in a simplified key such as this. The author has offered to examine, by arrangement, any problem material.

In addition to the key to genera, the booklet indicates how to recognize a sawfly, with some introductory information on their habits, biology, structure, collection and preservation. Further details of the genera and some of their species are given at the end of the key. The author also lists the 16 species of sawflies that have been added to the British list since R. B. Benson's keys were published by the Royal Entomological Society in 1951, 1952 and 1958. The first part has been revised by J. Quinlan and I. D. Gauld in 1981. Section B, published in 1952, has been out of print for many years and its non-availability, except in libraries, is a serious handicap for anyone wishing to identify sawflies to species level. Wouldn't it be nice if Adam Wright and the RES could come together to revise sections B and C of Benson's keys, preferably in AIDGAP style?!

A. J. HALSTEAD

SHORT COMMUNICATION

Some further records of *Astiosoma rufifrons* Duda (Diptera: Asteiidae).—In 1978 (*Proc. Trans. Br. Ent. Nat. Hist. Soc.* 11: 23–34) I added this species to the British list on the basis of flies attracted to wood ash at Windsor, Berks. The habits of the insect were also discussed in an account of flies attracted to bonfire smoke, wood ash and freshly cut logs at Windsor, published in the same year, when a further record by Ivan Perry from Lode, Cambs. was added (*Ent. Gaz.* 29: 253–257). This distinctive insect remains elusive, but I can report two further finds from the same habitat association as previously experienced.

During the 1985 Mendips-based Diptera Recording Schemes field meeting, I swept four males of *A. rufifrons* from cold wood ash at a bonfire site in a woodland clearing at Leigh Woods, Bristol on 4.vii.1985. Then on a British Entomological Society field meeting on 30.ix.1989 at Cirencester Park, Glos., we came upon a recently cleared area where several brushwood fires had taken place. Sweeping over the ash again produced a male of *A. rufifrons* (not mentioned in the Field Meeting report, *Br. J. Ent. Nat. Hist.* 3: 96).

We are no nearer establishing the reason for this interest in wood ash on the part of *Astiosoma*. It is seemingly widespread in old established woodland and the failure to find it by general collecting in common with *Microsania* and *Hormopeza* (also discussed in the second paper cited above) remains a mystery.—Peter Chandler, Weston Research Laboratories, Vanwall Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 4UF.